

JOURNAL-
EVERY EVENING

Circ.: 70,988

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Date MAY 10 1961

Can We Use Cloak and Dagger?

HOW are we to hold our own in this "cold and secret war" inflicted on us by Marxism a la Russe? It certainly seems logical to say that we must learn to fight fire with fire and match secrecy with secrecy. The Central Intelligence Agency has been doing that, however, and as a result the United States has suffered, in the U-2 incident and the Cuban fiasco, two stunning defeats in the cold and secret war.

What's the trouble, then? Is the CIA functioning inefficiently or stupidly? It is hard to know what goes on under the cloak of secrecy; yet it is not enough to know that the results have sometimes been very bad—we must know why they were bad. Perhaps General Taylor and Dr. Killian, both recently appointed to check into CIA activities, can between them give us the answer. Both are reliable men, and if the trouble lies in the way the CIA functions or the kind of men it employs, they should be able to tell us.

But is that the trouble? Walter Lippman implies that regardless of the inner workings of the CIA, there is something wrong with the premises on which it has been asked to play a new role to counter Russia's secret-war methods.

"In a free society like ours," says Lippman, "a policy is bound to fail which deliberately violates . . . our principles . . . It is not possible for a free and open society to organize successfully a spectacular conspiracy." The American conscience, he says, will make such a policy hesitant and ineffective, or prevent it outright.

This would merely be cause for despair if we had no alternative. But there is in fact an alternative, says Lippman. Communism claims to be the only and inevitable path of social progress on the ground that capitalism will always force our system to oppose social progress. But our system can offer a perhaps slower

but certainly surer path, the vaunted inevitability of Communist victory will evaporate; and the deeds we do in the open will win over the deeds the Communists do in secret.

We are offering such a program to Latin America now under the label of "Alianza Para Progreso." If it succeeds as Lippman implies it can, we shall need a house-cleaned CIA to provide the secret agents every government must have for its security. But a CIA which undertakes international adventures like the one in Cuba will no longer seem advisable.